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ABSTRACT

In 1970, as part of an effort to meet the needs of black children waiting for adoption by two-parent black families, the Chicago (Illinois) Child Care Society launched a longitudinal study of the growth, development, and family life of transracial adoptees (TRAs), or black and mixed-race children adopted by white families, and inracial adoptees (IRAs), or black and mixed-race children adopted by black families. This document reports the results of interviews with 35 TRAs and 20 IRAs and their parents when the children were 17 years old. It was found that: (1) the rate and type of adoptees' developmental problems were similar to those found in the general population; (2) the majority of adoptees had good self-esteem; (3) among IRAs, 83 percent said they were black, and among TRAs, 33 percent said they were black and 55 percent said they were of mixed race; (4) among TRAs, 73 percent lived in primarily white neighborhoods, while 55 percent of IRAs lived in primarily black neighborhoods; (5) TRAs had primarily white friends and IRAs had primarily black friends; (6) TRA females were more likely than TRA males to date blacks; (7) almost all TRAs knew of their adoption before they were 4 years old, while 80 percent of IRAs learned about their adoption after they were 4; and (8) a total of 83 percent of TRAs and 53 percent of IRAs expressed interest in meeting their biological parents. A list of 58 references is provided. (BC)

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FAMILY LIFE PROJECT: A LONGITUDINAL ADOPTION STUDY/PHASE V

TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION:

HOW IT IS 17 YEARS LATER

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FAMILY LIFE PROJECT: A LONGITUDINAL ADOPTION STUDY/PHASE V

TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION: HOW IT IS 17 YEARS LATER

SUMMARY

In the late 1960's when not enough two-parent black adoptive families had been identified by agencies to meet the needs of waiting black children, the Chicago Child Care Society pioneered new ways to meet those needs. We began considering white family applicants and single black applicants.

In order to assess the impact of these non-traditional placements, we began the Family Life Project: A Longitudinal Study in 1970 to study the adoptees' growth and development and their family life at significant life stages from infancy to adulthood. Studies of the adoptees and their families were conducted approximately every four years.

The most recent study was conducted when the adoptees were 17 years of age. We interviewed 35 transracial adoptees (TRAs) and 20 inracial adoptees (IRAs) and their parents. These adoptees represent 83% of the TRAs and 44% of the IRAs in the original sample.

Although the practice of transracial adoption continues to evoke controversy, there was nothing in our findings to suggest TRAs are not faring well. The major findings are as follows:

* The majority of the adopted adolescents were doing well. The rate and type of identified problems were similar to those found in the general population. Type of adoption was not related to rate of adjustment problems.

* The majority of the adoptees, both TRA and IRA, had good self-esteem; self-esteem was independent of stated race.

* Eighty-three percent of the IRAs said they were black; 33% of the TRAs said they were black; 55% of them said they were "mixed."

* Stated race was related to race of birth parents; stated race was independent of variables thought to promote black race identity. The majority of the TRAs have one birth parent identified as black and one, identified as white; the majority of the IRAs had two black birth parents.

* Seventy-three percent of the TRAs lived in primarily white neighborhoods; 55% of the IRAs lived in primarily

black neighborhoods. One half of both groups attended multiracial schools. Primary race of school and of neighborhood were not related to stated race.

* Almost all of the adoptees had at least 2 or 3 close friends. Although all of them had some white friends, the TRAs had primarily white friends while the IRAs, black friends.

* In dating, the TRA females were more likely to date blacks than were the TRA males. Opportunity appeared to play some role in this finding.

* One-half of the TRAs always knew of their adoption; Almost all of them knew before they were four. However, 80% of the IRAs learned about their adoption after they were 4.

* Thirty-eight percent of the TRAs and 53% of the IRAs are interested in meeting their birth parents, even though they would feel discomfort meeting them.

* No "search profile" or sex differences in interest were identified.

* The majority of both groups did not experience racial incidents in their school or neighborhood.

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Phase V of the Family Life Project: A Longitudinal Study at Chicago Child Care Society could not have been completed without many sources of support. First and foremost, without substantial funding from the Chicago Community Trust for three of the first four phases of the project as well as the present phase, a project like this could never have been initiated and sustained by our agency. The field of adoption is indebted to the Trust staff for their confidence in our agency to accomplish the proposed research.

The existence of the project is due to Kenneth W. Watson and Joan F. Shireman, Ph.D., the first project director, who had the vision to propose a longitudinal study and then pursue it over 20 some years. I am particularly appreciative of Ken's support, his perceptive comments and ideas during the progress of Phase V.

Obviously, the cooperation of the families who participated in this project over many years was essential to the success of the research. The 83% participation rate of the transracially adopting families over almost two decades is noteworthy. To all the project families, particularly the adoptees, thank you for sharing your histories and feelings with us.

To Gregory E. Stone, I owe many bytes of thanks. He coordinated many aspects of this project, supervised the data coding, performed all of the data analyses and designed tables and graphics needed for presentations and manuscripts.

Many research assistants made valuable contributions to the project. They are Lisa Gareleck, Leah Goldberg, Paula Hildebrand, Lissa Karron, Heather Strand, and Ayelet Yoles. The interviewers, Rebecca Berman, Beola Barber, Lissa Karron, Debora Schnitzer, and Holly Wilson were sensitive to the needs of the study participants and at the same time collected the research data required.

To all, I am grateful.

Karen S. Vroegh, Ph.D.
April, 1992

TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION: HOW IT IS 17 YEARS LATER[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

Adoption is generally accepted as the best plan for rearing children who cannot grow up in the families to which they were born. It provides permanent, legal families for children who might otherwise spend many years or even their whole childhood in the foster care system.

Although today considerable effort is directed toward preserving birth families with problems so that children can remain in their families of origin, a great need for adoptive families, particularly for "black"[2] and "mixed"[3] race children, exists. In 1982, 16,235 black children were free for adoption and adoptive placements had not been found for 12,177 of them. The percentage of black children remaining in foster care for more than four years is 34.6% for black children and 17.7% for white children (Mason & Williams, 1985, p. 84).

These rates might suggest that minority communities are unresponsive to waiting children. However, when family composition, income and age are controlled, the 1982 rate of adoption was 18 black children per 10,000 black families and 4 white children per 10,000 white families. In 1985, Mason and Williams (1985) projected that to meet the need white families should adopt at the rate of 6 per 10,000 families and that black families should adopt at the rate of 44 per 10,000 (p. 84). The Westat Report (1988) indicated that minority children waited an average of two years for placement compared to a one-year wait for non-minorities. The need for more adoptive families is clear, but it is not certain that sufficient numbers of black families can be located to meet the need of homes for the number of black children waiting.

Placing black children with white families (referred to as transracial adoption in this report) is one alternative for meeting the adoption needs of black children. Such adoptions were first made in the 1940's (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). That was at a time

---

[1] Slightly revised manuscript of report submitted to The Chicago Community Trust on February 14, 1992.

[2] While we are aware that African-American may now be the preferable term, when the project was initiated in 1970, "black" was the preferable term. For the sake of consistency and understanding across five phases of the project, we will continue to refer to the adoptees in this study as "black."

[3] "Mixed" race as used in this project refers to children who have one birth parent who was identified as black, and one birth parent considered Caucasian or white.

when the "melting pot" philosophy existed, at least among the dominant group. But such adoptions are not without controversy. There are widespread feelings that matching on physical characteristics is essential to facilitate family identification and good growth and development (Bartholet, 1991).

A. Transracial Adoption at Chicago Child Care Society

In the late 1960's when the community seemed unable to locate enough two-parent black adoptive families for waiting black children, Chicago Child Care Society (CCCS) pioneered new ways to meet this need. The agency developed creative efforts to recruit more two-parent black families and also turned to single-parent and white family applicants. White families were interested for several reasons. The number of white babies available for adoption was declining, and many families felt a spirit of altruism, the wish to overcome society's racial tensions, or the desire to contribute to the zero-population growth.

We believed it was important to assess carefully these non-traditional placements. As a result the Family Life Project was begun in 1970 to follow the growth and development of a cadre of adopted children and their family life from infancy to adulthood. Three groups of black infants were identified for study, infants placed with two-parent white families, infants placed with single-parents, and infants placed with traditional, two-parent black families.

With grant support from the Chicago Community Trust for four of the first five phases of the study, these parents and their adopted children were interviewed at significant life stages approximately every four years.

This is a report of the findings from Phase V, the most recent phase. The adoptees averaged 17 years of age at the time of the study. Reports of the findings of the earlier phases are as follows: infancy (Shireman and Johnson, 1975; 1976), toddlerhood (Shireman and Johnson, 1980), the elementary school years (Johnson, Shireman, and Watson, 1987; Shireman and Johnson, 1985; 1986), and the middle school years (Shireman, 1988; Vroegh, 1988).

Over the history of the Family Life Project, the numbers of prospective white adoptive parents wishing to adopt transracially and the number of black children needing adoptive homes has increased in the nation. Many professionals in the field of adoption, however, remained convinced that a child is best served by placement within an adoptive family of the same racial and ethnic heritage, in part because of a growing sense of ethnic consciousness and pride among blacks. The controversy between the opponents and proponents of transracial adoption seems likely to become even more of a political issue in the future.

B. Transracial Adoption Controversy

Critics. This controversy came clearly into focus in 1972, when the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) issued the following position statement :

> "...Black children should be placed only with Black families whether in foster care or for adoption. Black children belong physically, psychologically and culturally in black families in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future.... Black children in white families are cut off from a healthy development of themselves as black people....
>
> "Our position is based on:
> 1. the necessity of self-determination from birth to death, of all Black people.
> 2. the need of our young ones to begin at birth to identify with all Black people in a black community.
> 3. the philosophy that we need our own to build a strong nation.
>
> "We, the participants of the workshop, have committed ourselves to go back to our communities to end this particular form of genocide." (Howard, 1934, pp. 517-518).

In June, 1985, the president of the NABSW, William T. Merritt, testified before the Senate Hearing Committee on Labor and Human Resources. In part, he said:

> "Some experts and others believe that transracial adoption will alleviate the problem of large numbers of black children in care.
>
> "However, this is a myth because:
>
> * black children who grow up in white families suffer severe identity problems. On the one hand, the white community has not fully accepted them, and on the other hand, they have no significant contact with black people.
> * black children adopted transracially often do not develop coping mechanism necessary to function in a society that is inherently racist against African-Americans.
> *transracial adoptions in the long term often disrupt and the Black children are returned to foster care.

Merritt further stated that the NABSW viewed the placement of black children in white families as a hostile act against the black community.

Related research. A number of studies and reviews of research related to transracial adoption during the past two decades have

reported that the majority of black children adopted by white families have no more difficulties, are not more poorly adjusted, and do not have lower self-esteem or self-concepts than black children adopted by black families, white children adopted by white families, and birth children in both black and white families (e.g., Day, 1979; Grow & Shapiro, 1974, 1975a, 1975b; Johnson, Shireman, & Watson, 1987; McRoy & Freeman, 1986; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale & Anderson, 1982, 1984; Scarr & Weinberg,1976; Shireman, 1988; Shireman & Johnson (1975, 1976, 1980, 1985, 1986); Simon & Alstein, 1977, 1981, 1987; and Zastrow, 1977.) More than a simple majority of the adoptees in these studies were reported to be making successful adjustments. Feigelman and Silverman (1983) provide a good summary of the major transracial adoption research studies.

To our knowledge the research of Rita Simon and Howard Alstein is the only project similar to the longitudinal Family Life Project at CCCS. Since the early 1970's they also have followed a group of transracially adopted children and their families. The first two phases of their project focussed on the parents' decision to adopt non-white children; the last phase (Simon & Alstein, 1987) focussed on the children. Their sample differs from ours in that included among the transracial adoptees are children labelled as black, mixed race, Native American and Asian.

At the third phase of their study, 43% of their original sample of families participated in the research. The 111 transracial adoptees from 88 families in that phase averaged 14.8 years of age. The authors reported that more than 90% of the transracially adopted children said they enjoyed their family life and felt good about themselves (Simon & Alstein, 1987).

Although these research studies may be faulted for their small sample sizes, the mixing of different types of "transracial" adoption without distinction, the youth of the samples or the lack of statistical analyses, there appears to be no evidence on research grounds to support the position of the opponents of transracial adoption.

II. PURPOSES OF PHASE V

Phase V of the Family Life Project/A Longitudinal Study, supported by the Chicago Community Trust, at Chicago Child Care Society had three purposes:

1. To continue to explore the questions posed in earlier phases of the study, that is, how tranracially adopted children compared to inracially adopted children are developing behaviorally and academically, and in the areas of racial identity and family identity;

2. To examine whether there is evidence to support the hypothesis that "rejection of the differences" between adoptive and biological families contributes to difficulties within the adoptive family; and

3. To assess if there is a relationship between the desire of adoptees to search for their birth parents and satisfaction with adoption, general adjustment of the adoptee, and racial homogeneity of the family.

In order to determine how well the adopted children were meeting the challenges of growth and development at age 17, we decided to look at five major areas of development:

1. Race identification and racial identity;
2. Adjustment, including self esteem and school performance;
3. Relationships outside the family, including relationships with male and female peers and adults;
4. Family and sibling relationships;
5. Adoption and interest in searching for birth parents.

Successful handling of these areas of life would seem to be good indicators of how well an adopted young person is doing.

III. SAMPLE

A. Source

The original sample of 118 black infants came from adoptive placements at Chicago Child Care Society and Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois between 1970 and 1972. That sample consisted of adoptive placements made with 31 single parents, 42 white couples, and 45 black couples agreeing to participate in the study when asked during the time of sample selection. All of the single parents asked agreed to participate, half of the white couples agreed, and one-third of the black couples agreed.

B. Phase V Sample

The sample for this phase consists of 55 families and adolescents adopted transracially (35) and inracially (20) in infancy and who participated in one or more previous phases of the Family Life Project. The adopted children averaged 17 years of age at time of data collection. All of them were younger than two years of age at the time of placement.

In this report, adolescents who were adopted transracially are referred to as TRAs; those adopted inracially are referred to as IRAs.

All families who had ever been in the project and for whom we had addresses were sent letters about participating in the study. Extensive efforts were made to locate families who did not return the preaddressed and stamped envelope indicating willingness to participate. It should be noted that several families rejoined the study in Phase V after not participating in one or two previous phases. Generally they did not participate earlier because they were experiencing problems. The sample is described in Table I

Table 1

Description of Transracial (TRA) and Inracial (IRA) Adoptees and Their Families in Phase V of the Longitudinal Family Life Project

	Adoption Type	
	Transracial	Inracial
Sex		
Phase I (1970)		
male	25	23
female	17	22
Total	42	45
Phase V (1987)		
male	19	8
female	16	12
Total	35[4]	20[5]
Age		
19	3%	5%
18	31%	35%
17	43%	45%
16	23%	15%
Placement Age		
≤ 18 months	100%	100%
≤ 10 months	91%	100%
≤ 4 months	68%	85%
Race of birth parents		
Both black	26%	95%
One black/one white	74%	5%
Adoptee complexion at time of adoption (as noted in case record)		
Dark	9%	25%
Tan	31%	45%
Light	60%	30%

Table Continues

[4] One of the TRAs was not included in the majority of the analyses because only the parents completed the questionnaires and participated in an interview. The TRA was living with his pregnant girlfriend.

[5] Two of these IRAs were not included in the majority of the data analyses because neither one of them were interviewed. One of them lived at home, was expecting a child and did not know of her adoption according to her parents. The parents refused to let the second IRA be interviewed. They indicated that he had no serious problems, but had personality conflicts with them; the mother attributed any problems to his birth mother, saying it wasn't his fault.

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Table 1 (Continued)

	Adoption Type	
	Transracial	Inracial
Teen lives with		
Both adoptive parents	66%	75%
Adoptive parent plus a stepparent	23%	20%
Other	11%	5%
Socio-economic status (derived from Hollingshead, 1975)		
4-5 (highest)	97%	65%
2-3	3%	30%
Current number of children in adoptive family		
only child	3%	35%
2	28%	40%
3-4	43%	25%
5 or more	26%	--
Sibling Status of Adoptee		
Only child	3%	35%
No adopted sibs	40%	40%
Adopted sibs/Not TRA	11%	25%
Adopted sibs/TRA	46%	--
Parent's stated reasons for adoption		
To start family/ assure child's sex	22%	95%
Altruism and/or other reasons	78%	5%
Racial Composition of Neighborhood/School		
Multiracial	24%/50%	40%/53%
Primarily white	73%/47%	5%/21%
Primarily black	3%/ 3%	55%/26%

Two-thirds of the adoptive parents are still married. Glick and Lin (1986) estimated that between 40% and 50% of the children born in the late 1970's and early 1980's will experience parental divorce. Compared to Glick and Lin's estimates, Phase V families are more stable than families in general. When the TRA parents were no longer together, it was always due to divorce; for IRAs, it was almost always due to the death of one or both adoptive parents.

At Phase V we had some contact with 88% of the original TRA families and 62% of the IRA families. In all of those families the adoptions were still intact.

TRA - IRA differences. In Table 1, a number of sample differences are apparent. Some of the more notable include:

* The rate of continued participation in the study by the TRAs is almost twice that of the IRAs;
* More families of adoptive boys dropped from the study, particularly among the IRAs;
* The majority of TRAs have one black and one white birth parent while the majority of IRAs have two black birth parents;
* IRA families are smaller, the majority consisting of two or fewer children; the majority of the TRAs family have three or more children;
* One-third of the IRAs were only children; only one TRA was an only child;
* TRAs parents more likely included "altruism" among their reasons for adopting; IRAs adopted to start a family or assure sex of their child;
* The majority of the TRAs lived in primarily white neighborhoods while the IRAs lived in primarily black neighborhoods;
* Approximately half of both groups attended multiracial schools;

Implications of differences. Two of the differences noted particularly have implications when comparing the developmental outcome for the TRAs and IRAs. First, considerable attrition of the original IRA sample is apparent. Dropout occurred despite efforts made at least once a year to contact and obtain current addresses from each family, to inform them of project findings, and to express our appreciation for their continued participation. Eighty-three percent of the original TRA families participated in Phase V while only 44% of the IRAs participated. We know little about the 56% of the IRAs not participating. Do these families have more problems? Are the adoptees experiencing more problems, or are they doing particularly well? The findings from a brief phone interview provides limited answers to these questions (See p. 42).

Second, the majority of the TRAs had one black and one white birth parent (74%) and lighter complexions while almost all of the IRAs had two black birth parents (95%), and darker complexions. Complexion was determined by a caseworker's judgment. This finding

suggests that the adoptees were not randomly assigned to TRA and IRA families. Random assignment is a research technique (often difficult in clinical research) which would permit any differences observed to be attributed to the variable in question and not to the method and considerations of placement.

No observations of complexion were recorded at Phase V, so we do not know if this difference is still apparent. Since skin color is a primary classification variable in this country, it surely plays some different role in the experiences of the TRA and IRA children.

Comparing developmental outcomes. When we proposed Phase V, the plan was to compare the developmental outcomes of the TRAs and the IRAs. However, the very uneven dropout rate, the awareness of lack of random placement into type of adoption, and differences in other variables that could reasonably effect developmental outcome changed that plan somewhat.

The IRAs will be used as a comparison group in some instances when the comparison is not misleading. The IRAs will also be used to increase the sample size when the interest is in the interrelationships of developmental and environmental variables among black adopted teenagers.

C. Samples Not Included in Phase V

Adoptees of single parents[6]. We studied single parent adoptions in the first four phases of the project. They were not included in Phase V because single-parent adoptions are no longer considered unusual or controversial. We thought it prudent to concentrate our resources in this phase on the more controversial issues of transracial adoption. We intend to include these parents in the proposed Phase VI, however, because it is important to assess their long-term outcome.

Children living with birth parents. In Phase IV, Dr. Joan Shireman, then Project Director, added to the project 19 black children living with their birth parents in neighborhoods similar to those of the IRAs. This group was to serve as a comparison group against which the adoptees' growth and development and family life experiences could be compared. Eleven of these families agreed to participate in Phase V and were interviewed. However, after reviewing the demographic information, these families were not found to be a viable comparison for the TRAs or IRAs. The mean age of the children was two years younger than the TRAs and IRAs and some of them were born to single parents or were in step families at the time of recruitment. We decided that the time and money spent analyzing their data would not contribute significantly to the study.

---

[6] There were 31 single parents in the original sample of the Family Life Project. At Phase IV, 27 single parents participated in the research.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Data Collection

We collected data for this study by questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires and consent forms were sent before the interviews were scheduled. Stamped and addressed envelopes were provided for the adolescents and for their parents so that they could answer and return the questionnaires and their consent forms separately.

The preference was to interview the families in their homes. For the majority of the families living in the Chicago area, this was done. Fifteen of the TRAs and two of the IRAs were interviewed by phone, due to distance and their preference, respectively.

Each adolescent was sent $25.00 at the completion of the interview.

Questionnaires. The questionnaires asked general information about demographics, changes in the family since the last contact, school achievement, friendships, family and sibling relationships.

We also sent the adopted young people: (a) How I Feel About Myself (Rosenberg, 1965) which is a 10-item measure of self-esteem rated on a 4-point scale, (b) a 25-item Behavior Checklist of behavior difficulties adapted from the one used in Phase IV, and (c) a Parent Behavior Inventory adapted from Schaefer (1965). This inventory assesses the child's perceptions of parent acceptance of, rejection of, and involvement with their child as well as of parent encouragement of individuation.

The parents were also asked to complete Indices of Coping Activity adapted from Kirk (1984). Two scores are obtained, an Acknowledgment-of-Difference score and a Sameness-Difference score. Kirk identified two reactions of adoptive families in response to the fact that their children were adopted. Either they acknowledge the differences that adoption makes or they reject those differences. Kirk hypothesized that "rejection-of-differences" is more often associated with behavior problems and developmental difficulties in adopted children.

Interviewers. Five females conducted the interviews. Three of them were social workers with clinical experience; another had considerable interviewing experience as an anthropologist and the fifth had interviewing experience while working in a business school in the areas of placement.

The interviewers worked in pairs, one of them interviewing the mother and father together and one, interviewing the adoptee. Over the course of the project, each interviewer worked with all the other interviewers and interviewed both parents and adoptees, but never in the same family.

Interviews. Interviews lasted one to two hours. The interview format allowed for open-ended responses to standard questions.

The interview content was similar for the TRAs and IRAs adolescents and for the TRA and IRA parents. Any differences were due to some questions not being appropriate for one of the groups.

The adoptee interview covered such topics as family relationships, adoption, friendships and dating, education, race identification, knowledge of and interest in birth parents, search, and concerns and wishes for the future.

The parent interview included questions about family relationships, adoption issues, search, child's race identity, and concerns about transracial adoption.

The interviewer wrote a summary of the response to each question, recording it word for word only if the answer was short. Following the interview, she wrote an overall summary including any information that would be useful in getting a better understanding of the adoptee and his or her family.

B. Preparation of Data for Analyses

Coding. Two persons coded the interview item responses. Disagreements between them as to the correct code for an item were settled through discussions and with the help of the project coordinator, if necessary.

General Adjustment scores. Four persons rated the interviewer summaries of the parents and of the child. These ratings were used to obtain a General Adjustment score for each adoptee.

Two of the raters were clinicians with many years' experience working with families, adults and children of all ages. One of them has a psychoanalytic background while the other uses a more historical, developmental approach. The two other raters were researchers, one of whom is closest in age to the adoptees and has a degree in counseling psychology. The other researcher, the mother of two teenage boys, has taught child development.

The raters read the two summaries for each family and placed each adoptee in one of five categories of adjustment: (1) Serious Problems, (2) Less Serious Problems, (3) Problems but Probably Temporary, (4) No Problems, and (5) No Problems and Exceptional in Family Relations, School Achievement and Extracurricular Activities. The raters were instructed to judge each adoptee as to present problems, not in terms of past problems or any anticipated problems. General Adjustment scores are based on these ratings. For some data analyses, the problem groups (2) and (3) were combined.

Of the 55 cases, all four interviews agreed unanimously on the placement of 22 (40%) adoptees into one of the five categories. When

the two "problem" categories were collapsed and the two "no problem" categories were collapsed, thus ignoring the seriousness of the problem, or the quality of no problems, the four raters agreed on the placement of 65% of the teens. For the remaining 35% of the teens, three of four of the raters agreed about each teen having a "problem" or "no problem."

The reason for the less than unanimous assignment of cases to one of the "problem" or "no problem" categories was discussed by the researchers. They concluded that the lack of agreement was not due to lack of information or consistent information for all the adoptees, but rather to a universal difficulty in establishing uniform criteria for determining if teenage behavior is problematic and if so, how serious is it. In this particular case, the four raters have had very different experiences with teenagers. They weighed and combined on different scales the many different pieces of information about each teen. No instructions could have possibly taken these differences into account.

In spite of some rating differences, we felt comfortable assigning each of the 55 teens a General Adjustment score based on the ratings. We used the following system. If all raters agreed, the teen was assigned that score. If all of the raters were on the "problem" or "no problem" side but did not agree as to quality, the moderate score was assigned rather than the extreme score. When only three of the four raters agreed as to "problem" or "no problem," the moderate score on the side of the three agreeing raters was assigned.

Examples of General Adjustment scores. Children in the five adjustment categories are described as follows:

(1) Serious Problems

A. Depressed and lethargic; once musically talented but gave up and no thoughts as to why; about to drop out of school according to parents and is suspected of substance abuse.

B. Talked openly during interview, but was crying at end; implied that _____ might "die" soon; has distanced self from parents; friendships are problematic; Parents reported that teen tried to take life.

(2) Less Serious Problems

C. Has cerebral palsy, epilepsy and slow speech patterns; not accepted by peers; seems to shy from depth and commitment.

D. Six months into an unplanned pregnancy; has decided to keep child; had not been doing well in school but pregnancy has changed that. Parents stated accomplishments with pride.

(3) Problems but Probably Temporary

E. Lives with father and step-mother; sees adoptive mother only a couple of times a year, but talks on phone regularly; father and teen have seen a counselor to deal with a number of problems, including new marriage, new siblings, and general problems of adolescence; feelings of sadness in teen sensed.

F. Constantly worries about taking care of everyone's needs; recovering from depression due to alcoholic father, divorce of parents, move to smaller home; teen challenges self to meet goals; mature for age.

(4) No Problems

G. Gets along with both parents, but is mildly bothered by Mom's nagging; currently testing curfew, but eventually follows the rules; confident and happy with life and future prospects; will attend college on a sports scholarship.

H. Seems to have a good awareness of self, feelings and how they fit with others; good relationships with parents; is reconciled with adoption; therapist is an important force in life while working on problems related to race and recovery from "depression;" parents are proud of teen.

I. Polite, laid-back, very likeable; answered all interview questions, but not in detail; doesn't ponder issues; adoption is not an issue of concern; has a steady date and feels close to date's family; parents are worried about laziness in school; doesn't get into trouble, just doesn't work hard.

(5) No Problems and Exceptional in the Area of Family Relations, Achievement in School and Extracurricular Activities.

J. Attractive, smart and confident; living in well-adjusted family; gets along well with parents; some tension between adoptee and younger sibling born to the adoptee's parents and who is less outgoing and popular; some racial tension in dating due to date's parents, but now all are good friends; mother feels adoptee is too good to be true. Family environment is intellectually stimulating.

K. Adoptee attractive with pleasant personality; has tremendous amount of self-confidence; is goal-

oriented, wants to be a physician; has close relationship with parents who are proud; exceptional family.

Adjustment in Phases II - IV. The project director, the project coordinator and a research assistant rated the interviewer summaries in the previous phases of the Family Life Project on a four-point scale, using similar criteria used in Phase V. The average of the three ratings was assigned to each adoptee. Since only a four-point scale was used, the less-serious-problem and temporary-problem categories were combined in order to compare the early adjustment scores with the General Adjustment scores in Phase V.

It should be noted that the interview summaries from the earlier phases were made by different interviewers than in Phase V, probably under different instructions. The assigned scores provide only a rough estimate of adjustment in Phases II through IV.

POSAC. Assessments of human development for a group of individuals on a set of variables can result in many individual profiles that are not easily comparable. As developed by Shye (1985) and based on the theory of Guttman scaling, Partial Order Scalogram Analysis by Coordinates (POSAC) simultaneously examines a number of individuals' profiles based on a set of variables. Patterns in the data that might not otherwise be apparent are revealed. The patterns are represented graphically in a two-dimensional space, showing relationships among the individuals.

POSAC behaves in a way similar to clinical judgment. A computer program processes a set of variables describing a number of individuals. Using the richness of clinical judgment, POSAC preserves the identity of each individual. At the same time POSAC permits visual comparison of the profiles of all the individuals in a two-dimensional figure called a scalogram (e.g., See Fig. 1, p. 19). Each individual's profile score is the sum of his or her scores on all the variables in the analysis (e.g., See Table 3, p.25).

The program plots individuals with similar profiles close together and further away from persons with dissimilar profiles. At the same time it plots individuals with the same score for a profile variable as close together as possible. The directions of the scores from low to high for each variable in the profiles are indicated along the margins of the scalogram (e.g., See Fig. 1, p. 19).

POSAC Adjustment scores. To obtain POSAC Adjustment scores, we subjected to a POSAC analysis a set of variables denoting aspects of adjustment for 53 adopted adolescents. The four variables in the analysis were: parent-child relationship, self-esteem, school performance and perceived quality of life compared to peers.

POSAC Race Promotion and POSAC Racial Identity scores. The POSAC analysis was also used to develop Race Promotion scores and Racial Identity scores. The six race promotion variables included in the analysis were: parents doing special things to promote black identity, race of neighborhood, race of high school, child's race at stated by parents, city size, and presence of other transracial adoptees in the family. Four variables were analyzed to obtain Racial Identity scores. They were: stated race, race of dates, race of male and of female friends.

V. RESULTS

RACE IDENTIFICATION AND IDENTITY

A. Related Issues

Before discussing findings regarding race identification and racial identity, we need to examine the terms race, identification, identity, and ethnicity so that the reader will know the context of their use in this report.

What does the word race signify? To the lay person perhaps the answer is simple. Learning about race generally comes from stereotyped presentations rather than personal experience with individuals of other groups (Zuckerman, 1990). Races have been defined in terms of observable physical features, such as skin color, hair type and color, eyes, stature, head shape and size, and facial features, especially noses. The problem is that many of these features are not correlated and none of the features by themselves furnishes an indisputable guide to the designation of a race. As a result designations of race are made on the basis of political, cultural and sociological rather than biological considerations. Racial groupings are more alike in terms of biological characteristics than they are different (Zuckerman, 1990).

Earlier we noted that the black adolescents in Phase V vary considerably in complexion and birth parentage (See Table 1). Although we use the term black to refer to all the teens in this report, no particular biological similarity among the designates should be assumed.

The term identification refers to the labelling of a person as being part of a group, a race group in this instance. A self-identification such as stated race or ethnicity may be at variance with the label assigned by others.

Identity, or self-concept, is the sum of who and what a person is. The concept of identity is the object of considerable theoretical discussion but has few agreed upon referents. Presumably identity is learned, becomes more stabilized with age and can be observed through thoughts, words, and deeds. Poussaint (1981)

suggests that blacks vary a great deal in their life experiences, making it difficult to generalize about a black self-concept.

In Phase V, racial identity which is part of one's total identity will be inferred from an adoptee's stated race and choice of friendships and dates.

Ethnicity (ethnic identity) is a cultural term with sociological and political implications. Persons with a common declared ethnicity believe that they share a common descent and history, a belief usually supported by myths or a partly fictitious history (Klein, 1980, p. 8).

Ethnic groups are often organized around "racial characteristics," but ethnicity is not identical to race, even though many assume the two concepts are congruent. Phinney (1990) points out that there no widely agreed-on definition of ethnic identity, and that theoretical concepts far outweigh empirical research.

B. Race Identification

In Phase V, the adoptees appeared to have a clear feeling about their race category, generally identifying themselves in a category reflecting their biological heritage.

We asked each TRA and IRA to identify him- or herself as to race. "When asked about your race/ethnicity, how do you categorize yourself?" We realize now, but did not at the time of data collection, that separate questions about race and ethnicity should have been asked.

Children who had birth parents identified as black generally reported their race as black while adoptees who had one black and one white birth parent more often reported their race as "mixed." Not unexpectedly, 83% of the IRAs said, "black." On the other hand, 33% of the TRAs said, "black" and 55% said, "mixed." Only four (9%) said, "it depends," meaning whatever was politic. Only one of these four seemed truly confused.

Forty-four percent of the TRA parents said their child was black and 32% said, "mixed;" 12% and 13% (4), respectively, said, "it depends," and "white."

The adoptive parents and their child did not always agree as to stated race. Adoptees who stated they were black generally had parents who stated they were black. However, the parents of children who stated they were mixed generally said their child was black.

Some of the TRA parents told us that when their children were placed, they had different expectations at to the race their child would assume. About the same percent who expected their child to be black, said their child was black in Phase V. Very few of the

parents expected their child to say mixed. Thirty percent didn't know what to expect when their child was placed.

Related variables. Stated race was not independent of two physical descriptors of the adoptees. Chi-square analyses were performed to test the independence of TRAs' stated race (black, mixed or depends) and variables hypothesized to be related to stated race. It was found that teens with dark complexions were more likely to report their race as black while those with lighter complexions reported mixed or depends ($X^2 = 5.30$, $p < .03$). Stated race was also not independent of the race of the adoptees' birth parents ($X^2 = 17.27$, $p < .001$).

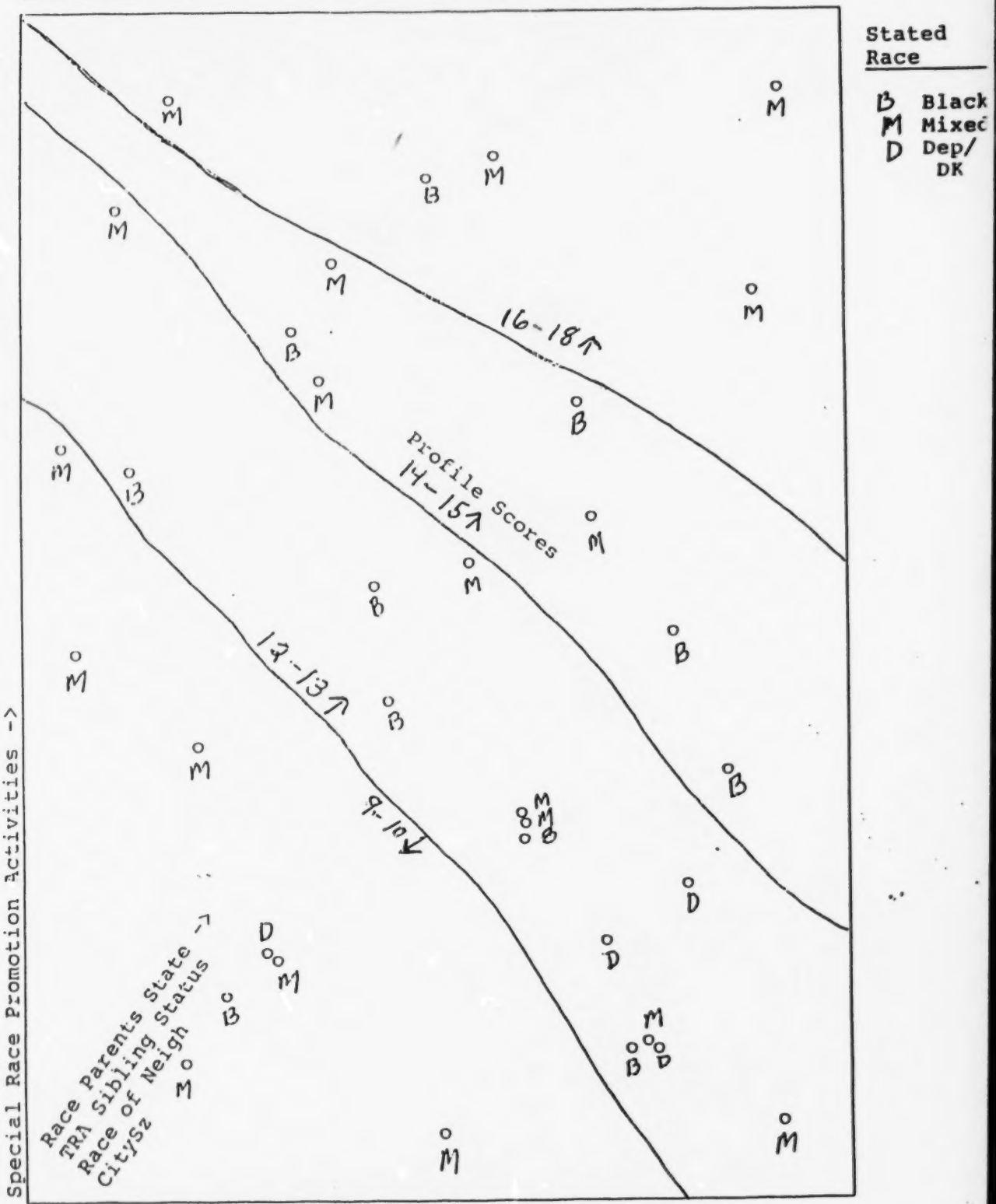
McRoy and Freeman (1986) believe that many interracial couples are teaching their children to define their race identity as "mixed," not as black or white. They also believe that parents of TRAs usually view their adoptees as part white or mixed, and that the children as a result usually identify themselves accordingly. We did not find this to be true in Phase V. Forty-four percent of the parents stated their children are black while only 32% said, "mixed."

Additional Chi-square analyses indicated that stated race was independent of racial makeup of school attended and neighborhood, of race of friendships and dates, and of race of older adults with whom they are friends. We also found that stated race was independent of the presence of other black siblings in the home.

Race identification promotion. TRAs who had similar Race Promotion experiences did not necessarily have the same stated race. The scalogram resulting from the POSAC analysis of the TRAs' Race Promotion variables scores (See p. 16 for variables included) is presented in Figure 1. Thirty (30) different profiles for 34 TRAs are presented. In the Figure 1, the profiles are labeled as to stated race. It can be seen that TRAs with similar Race Promotion scores often have a different stated race.

Figure 1

Scalogram of POSAC Race Promotion Scores



A t-test indicated that the Race Promotion scores of the TRAs who stated they are black were not higher than the scores of those stating they are mixed or "it depends."

Race preferences in Phases II - IV. In Phase III, when the TRAs and IRAs were eight years old, there were no remarkable dissimilarities between their racial preferences. This finding was based on responses to the Clark Doll Test (Clark & Clark, 1958), a different assessment of racial preference than used in Phase V.

About 75% of both groups in Phase III identified themselves as black even though at four years of age (Phase II), 71% of the TRAs and only 53% of the IRAs identified themselves as black (Johnson, Shireman, & Watson, 1987; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Shireman, 1988).

In Phase IV when the adoptees were approximately 12 years of age, the IRA and TRA black preference scores on the Morland semantic differential (Williams & Morland, 1976) did not differ (Shireman, 1988). Measures of social distance from Black Americans also failed to distinguish TRAs from IRAs.

C. Racial identity.

A POSAC analysis of the Racial Identity variables (See p. 16) found 15 different Racial Identity profiles among the 34 TRAs. Even though all of them were considered black at placement, they varied widely as to racial identity as adolescents.

A Pearson product-moment correlation computed between the Race Promotion scores and the Racial Identity scores was not significant.

Special things parents of black children do. In answer to a question about what special thing parents do as parents of black adolescents, more TRA than IRA parents mentioned activities they thought might help their teen to assume a black identity. Some lived in multiracial neighborhoods and others had black friends and attended church among blacks.

For the most part, however, the parents of both group made no special efforts. In earlier phases, the TRA parents were more likely to do special things to promote race identity.

McRoy and Zurcher (1983) hypothesized that the opportunity for positive relationships with blacks on an everyday basis is the key factor in the development of black racial identity and feelings of pride, but they presented no data to support their hypothesis. Nor did our data support this hypothesis. The majority of the TRA children in Phase V live in white neighborhoods and all have white parents, but their racial identity and identification scores were consistent with their assigned race.

D. Racial Incidents

Racial incidents do not seem to be a significant part of the lives of the TRAs in this study. The frequency of reported incidents was about the same in their neighborhoods as it was in their schools.

The adolescents were asked how frequently they experienced racial incidents such as name calling, insults, slurs, etc. in their school and in their neighborhood. Only three of the 35 TRAs reported that they frequently experienced racial incidents in their schools. Twelve said they infrequently experienced such incidents. More than half of the TRAs and almost all of the IRAs said they never experienced such incidents.

Name calling was the primary experience reported. A small number said that they were avoided by their peers. One teen changed high schools because of the problem. Most handled the incidents without difficulty.

Parents, particularly TRA parents, believed their children had more experiences than the children themselves reported. Only one-third of the teens experiencing racial incidents talked to their parents about them. Parents generally advised ignoring racial incidents rather than confronting the perpetrator.

Related variables. Over 70% of the TRAs lived in white neighborhoods, but the majority of them did not report experiencing racial incidents. Of those experiencing such incidents, however, the majority lived in white rather than multiracial neighborhoods. The TRAs attending predominately white high schools, however, did not experience a greater frequency of racial incidents than TRAs attending multiracial high schools.

With regard to complexion, we found that being lighter or darker was independent of racial incidents by TRAs both in their schools and in their communities.

Over half of the IRAs live in black communities, the others lived in multiracial communities. Eighty percent attended black or multiracial high schools. Although race of community and of high school were not related to frequency of racial incidents for TRAs, it will be interesting to learn if the rates of racial incidents are similar for the TRAs and IRAs when as adults they work and play in a broader community. Rosenberg (1977) noted that racially homogeneous neighborhoods protect individuals from prejudices in the outside world.

ADJUSTMENT

Most adolescents, even those who are living under less than optimal conditions are managing to develop as socially and emotionally healthy individuals. Only a small percentage of all children exposed to risk will develop serious problems which may

be chronic. Healthy individuals of the same chronological age, however, vary enormously in their personalities, talents, values, aspirations, growing patterns, coping skills, strengths and weaknesses (Feldman & Elliot, 1990; Hauser & Bowlds, 1990; Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1981).

Freiberg (1991) in his summary of the 1988 National Health Interview Survey with parents of 17,000 children under age 18 reported that one in five American children had a developmental, learning, or emotional problem. Thirteen percent of the children between three and 18 years of age had emotional or behavioral disorders which lasted more than three months and required treatment. Such problems were twice as likely in children in disrupted families as intact, two-parent families. We conclude that the rates of problems in Phase V compare favorably with estimated national rates of problems experienced by teenagers. The majority of the TRAs and IRAs are doing quite well.

Shireman (1988) found that most of the children at Phase IV were doing quite well and those with problems in one area often showed strength in another (p. 35). That is still true. The majority of both TRAs and IRAs in Phase V were not living problematic lives. They may have a problem in one area of life or another, but that problem did not seem to affect over all adjustment.

The analyses of two estimates of adjustment as well as of other variables suggest that the within group variation of these variables is so great that we can not conclude that transracial adoption results in children who are more poorly adjusted than other children. There are so many variables affecting growth and development (genetics, temperament, ordinal position, family structure, interpersonal relationships, history, parental attitudes, etc.) that it would difficult to identify one variable, transracial adoption, for instance, as the source of problematic behavior.

Two estimates of each adoptee's adjustment were analyzed. One estimate, called General Adjustment, is based on ratings of the interviewer summaries (See pp. 12-15). The second estimate, POSAC Adjustment was derived from a POSAC analysis (See pp. 15).

A. General Adjustment

The frequencies of cases in the five General Adjustment categories are presented in Table 2. Differences in the rate and seriousness of the problems among the TRAs and IRAs do not appear to be of significance.

TABLE 2

General Adjustment Problems among TRAs and IRAs.

Problem Severity	N (%)*	Adoption Type	
		Transracial n (%)	Inracial n (%)
Serious	2 (4%)	2 (6%)	0
Less Serious	10 (19%)	6 (18%)	4 (22%)
Temporary	8 (15%)	7 (20%)	1 (5.5%)
None - Ok	29 (56%)	17 (50%)	12 (67%)
None - Many Good Qualities	3 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (5.5%)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	34 (100%)	18 (100%)

* Two IRAs and 1 TRA were not included because they were not interviewed.

The serious and less serious problems for the most part involved learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, speech impediments, doing poorly in school, pregnancy, and alienation from family members. More serious problems such as suicide and depression were significant issues for only four of the adolescents. Only one case specifically mentioned racial identity as a problem but the interviewers identified two or three adolescent they believed had racial identity problems.

B. POSAC Adjustment

In Table 3 is a listing of the observed POSAC Adjustment profile scores. Figure 2 is a graphic representation or scalogram of these scores. It can be seen that adoptees with similar scores are close together in the scalogram and farther away from adoptees with dissimilar profiles. The solid lines in Figure 2 were drawn to serve as a visual aid to indicate the boundaries of the profiles according to higher and lower adjustment profile scores. The lines are not products of the POSAC analysis.

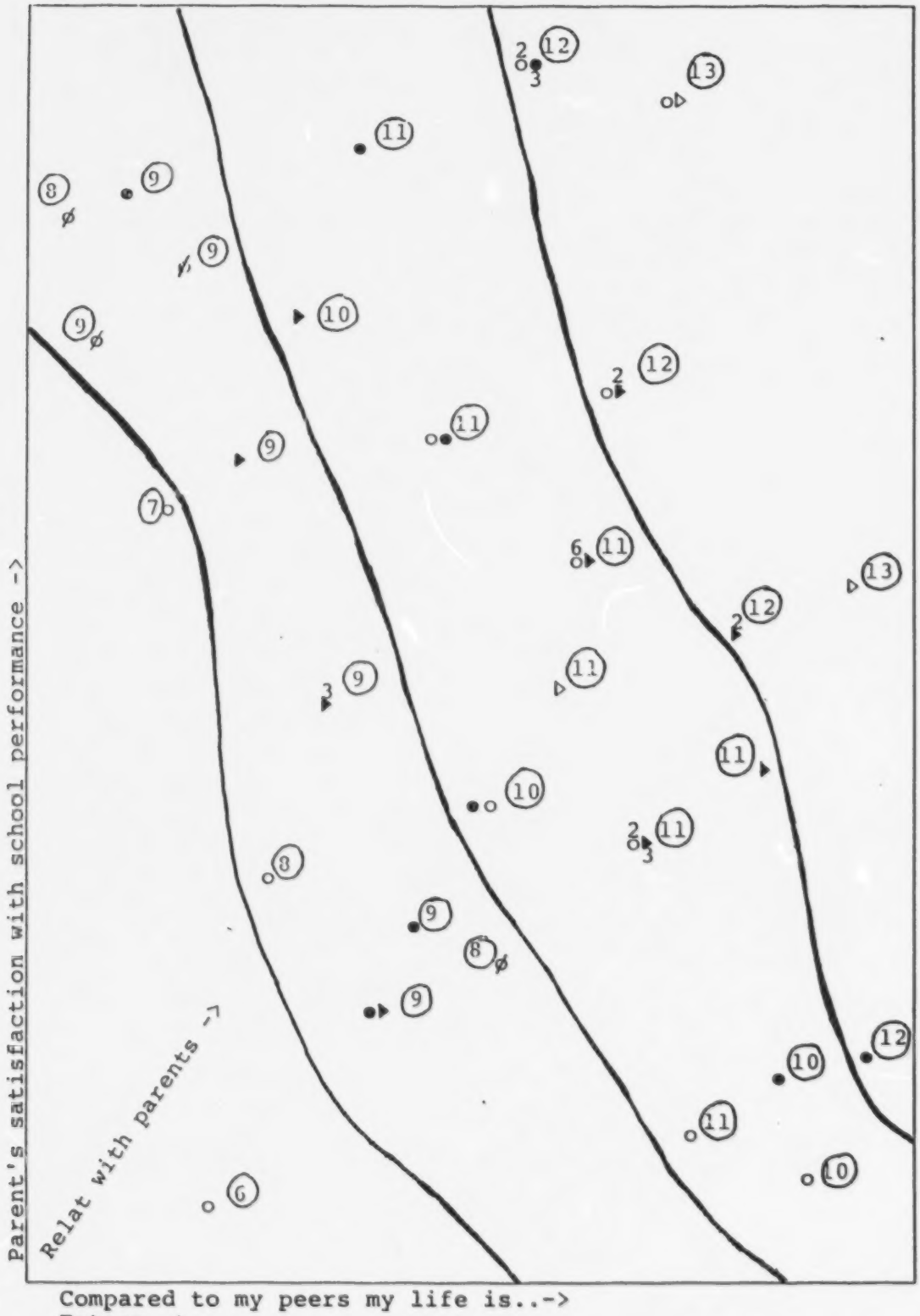
Table 3

POSAC Adjustment Profile Scores of 34 TRA and 18 IRA Adolescents.

Profile ID	Profile	Sum of Profile Scores	Frequency	TRA / IRA
1*	3 4 3 4	14	Nobody	
2	3 3 3 4	13	2	TRA IRA
3	3 4 2 4	13	1	IRA
4	3 4 1 4	12	1	TRA
5	3 3 3 3	12	5	TRA TRA TRA TRA TRA
6	2 3 3 4	12	4	TRA IRA IRA IRA
7	3 3 2 4	12	2	IRA IRA
8	2 3 2 4	11	5	TRA TRA IRA IRA IRA
9	3 3 3 2	11	1	TRA
10	2 3 3 3	11	2	TRA TRA
11	1 3 3 4	11	1	IRA
12	3 3 2 3	11	7	TRA TRA TRA TRA TRA TRA
IRA				
13	3 3 1 4	11	1	TRA
14	2 4 2 3	11	1	IRA
15	2 4 1 3	10	1	TRA
16	1 4 1 4	10	1	TRA
17	2 3 3 2	10	1	IRA
18	2 3 2 3	10	2	TRA TRA
19	1 3 2 3	9	2	TRA IRA
20	2 2 2 3	9	1	TRA
21	3 1 3 2	9	1	TRA
22	2 2 3 2	9	1	IRA
23	2 3 2 2	9	3	IRA IRA IRA
24	2 3 3 1	9	1	TRA
25	3 2 3 1	9	1	TRA
26	3 2 1 2	8	1	TRA
27	2 2 2 2	8	1	TRA
28	3 1 3 1	8	1	TRA
29	3 1 2 1	7	1	TRA
30	1 2 1 2	6	1	TRA
31*	1 1 1 1	4	Nobody	

Figure 2

Scalogram of POSAC Adjustment Profile Scores



Twenty-nine (29) different POSAC Adjustment profiles were found for 53 adoptees. A goodness-of-fit index indicated that 84% of the profiles-pairs are correctly represented in the scalogram.

In the Figure 2, the directions of the scores for each variable contributing to the profile score are indicated along the margins of the scalogram . The higher or more positive scores for Parent's Satisfaction with School Performance are expected toward the top of the scalogram, the lower scores, toward the bottom. The higher scores for Compared to My Peers ... and Esteem are expected to be located to the right in the scalogram, the lower scores to the left. High Relationship with Parent scores should fall closer to the upper right corner of the scalogram, the lower scores closer to the lower left corner. TRAs and IRAs with higher scores for all four variables will be placed in the upper portion of the scalogram, somewhere near the upper right corner.

It is rare that any adoptee was doing well or poorly on all variables. Many have higher scores in some areas of adjustment and lower scores in other areas. The TRA and the IRA POSAC Adjustment scores are plotted in all parts of the scalogram.

The percent of each group in the four adjustment profile groups identified in Figure 2 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Distribution POSAC Adjustment Profile Scores among TRAs and IRAs.

Profile Scores	N (%)	Adoption Type	
		Transracial n (%)	Inracial n (%)
High (12-14)	15 (28%)	8 (23.5%)	7 (37%)
Med High (10-11)	23 (43%)	16 (47%)	7 (37%)
Med Low (8-9)	13 (25%)	8 (23.5%)	5 (26%)
Low (6-7)	2 (4%)	2 (6%)	0
TOTAL	53 (100%)	34 (100%)	19 (100%)

C. Summary of Adjustment

We analyzed two estimates of the adoptees' adjustment. The estimates from the interviewer summaries were based on clinical assessments. The POSAC adjustment estimates were based on data provided by the adoptees during the interview or through the questionnaires. A Pearson product-moment correlation of the two estimates of adjustment was significant for the TRAs with $r(35) = .53$, $p < .001$ for the TRAs. The estimates were not related for the IRAs.

A review of Tables 2 and 4 suggests that there are no significant differences in the rates of problems for the TRAs and the IRAs. In Table 2 the percent of "serious problems" and "problems, but probably not serious" are about the same for the two groups. In Table 4 when the low and medium low POSAC profile adjustment scores indicative of some adjustment problems are combined, the rates of problematic adjustment are about the same for the TRAs and IRAs. According to both estimates, the majority of the adoptees, whether TRA or IRA, are doing well.

Stated race and adjustment. Seventy-seven percent of the TRAs labelling themselves as black did not have any problems and 60% of those saying they were mixed had no problems.

In Figure 2, each adoptee is labelled as to stated race. Adoptees with similar POSAC Adjustment scores do not necessarily have the same stated race. A t-test between the POSAC Adjustment profiles scores of TRAs who said they were black and those who said, "mixed" or "it depends," was not significant.

Of the two adolescents with serious problems, one stated his/her race as black while the other said, "didn't know." Of the three rated to be doing exceptionally well, two stated they were black and one said, "mixed."

Adjustment in Phases I-IV. To learn more about the adjustment of the adoptees at earlier stages of their lives, we went back to summary statements made about the families and adoptees during Phases II, III and IV (See p. 15) for rating procedure). The ratings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

General Adjustment and POSAC Adjustment scores[1] in Phases II - V.

	General Adjustment				POSAC Adjustment
Adoptee#	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V	Phase V
1	4	4	2-3	1	9
2	4	2-3	2-3	1	8
3	2-3	-	2-3	2	9
4	-	4	-	2	11
5	4	4	-	2	8
6	4	5	5	2	11
7	4	4	4	2	7
8	2-3	1	2-3	2	12
9	2-3	4	2-3	2	13
10	4	-	-	2	11
11	2-3	4	4	2	12
12	2-3	2-3	2-3	2	9
13	1	-	-	3	11
14	4	-	4	3	9
15	4	2-3	2-3	3	12
16	1	1	4	3	11
17	-	4	4	3	8
18	-	4	4	3	6
19	4	4	4	3	11
20	4	4	4	3	11
21	2-3	2-3	4	4	9
22	1	2-3	-	4	10
23	2-3	-	-	4	11
24	1	2-3	2-3	4	12
25	2-3	2-3	2-3	4	12
26	5	2-3	4	4	10
27	2-3	2-3	-	4	11
28	2-3	4	4	4	11
29	-	-	-	4	11
30	4	4	4	4	10
31	4	2-3	-	4	12
32	4	-	2-3	4	11
33	5	2-3	2-3	4	11
34	-	4	-	4	9
35	4	4	5	4	13
36	4	4	4	4	10
37	-	4	2-3	4	11
38	4	4	-	4	9
39	2-3	2-3	-	4	11
40	4	4	-	4	9

Table Continues

Table 5 (Continued)

	General Adjustment				POSAC Adjustment
Adoptee#	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V	Phase V
41	2-3	-	-	4	12
42	4	4	4	4	11
43	4	2-3	5	4	9
44	2-3	4	4	4	10
45	3	2-3	4	4	9
46	5	4	3	4	13
47	5	4	2-3	4	11
48	2-3	2-3	-	4	12
49	4	2-3	2-3	4	11
50	4	4	5	5	12
51	4	2-3	2-3	5	12
52	2-3	2-3	4	5	12

1 General Adjustment scores:

1 = serious problems; 2 = less serious;
3 = some problems, likely temporary;
4 = no problems; 5 = no problems, exceptional.

POSAC Adjustment scores:

6 - 9 = problems; 10 - 11 = no problems;
12 - 13 = doing exceptionally well.

Phase II - IV Adjustment scores:

1 = serious problems; 2-3 = problems;
4= no problems; 5 = no problems, exceptional.

One would have trouble predicting from earlier phases which children would have problems. Of the 12 children with less serious problems at Phase V (Adoptees # 1 through 20), only 3 (Adoptees # 3, 8, and 12) had problems to some extent in all previous phases. The two with serious problems now (Adoptees # 1 and 2), did not have serious problems in previous phases, although both had indication of some problems in Phase IV.

Only seven (Adoptees # 30, 35, 36, 38, 40, 42, and 50) of the 32 adoptees who had no General Adjustment problems at Phase V had no problems in previous phases.

Shireman (1988) concluded that the adoptees with problems in one phase of the Longitudinal Adoption Project were not the same one with problems in earlier phases. Analysis of the current data supports that conclusion.

D. Other Indicators of Adjustment

Self-esteem. The majority of the teenage adoptees in Phase V, whether TRA or IRA, black or mixed, have good self-esteem. The Esteem scores of the adoptees ranged between 22 and 40 (M = 32.8; scale range, 10 - 40) with all the scores falling in the range of feeling good or very good about self. A t-test between the esteem scores of the TRAs labelling themselves as black and those saying mixed was not significant.

Six of nine adoptees who had the lower Esteem scores in Phase V (-2 s.d or greater below the mean of the group) had General Adjustment problems; one had serious problems. Only one of the five adoptees having the highest self-esteem was rated to have General Adjustment problems.

Inspection of the Esteem scores suggested that equal numbers of TRAs who stated they were mixed or black had high self-esteem scores and lower self-esteem scores. Of the five adoptees (4 TRA and 1 IRA) who stated their race was "it depends," three had lower self-esteem scores, two did not. It should be reiterated that self-esteem was not found to be related to stated race.

Both Phinney (1990) and Rosenberg (1986) reported no evidence that low self-esteem is associated with identifying with a low status group or minority group. Cummings (1975) reported that levels of self-esteem do not differ between black adolescents who define themselves as "Negro," "colored," or "Afro-American," or who fail to define themselves in any racial terms. He concluded that identification with whites, or "white standards," is not associated with psychological instability.

Tizzard and Phoenix (1989) in their review of transracial adoption concluded that the self-esteem of TRAs was on the average high and few preferred to be white. They found identical results for black children brought up in their birth families. They concluded that no direct relationship has been found between racial pride and self-esteem.

School performance. Only a few of the adoptees said they were not satisfied with their school performance. Most thought they were doing satisfactorily, even though some of them thought they could do better.

Over 70% of the adoptees reported getting "C's" or better in school. However, almost all of the parents believed their child could do better in school. Many of the adoptive parents believed that their children lacked the motivation for good school performance.

Ten of the TRAs were either diagnosed or thought to have a learning disability. This disability was given as a reason for not doing well in school.

Adolescent pregnancy. Unplanned or unwanted pregnancy is almost always stressful for adolescents. Three of the IRA teens in this project had delivered or were pregnant at the time of the Phase V. None of the female TRAs indicated that this was the case for them. However, the parents of one TRA male who was not interviewed indicated that he was living with his pregnant girlfriend.

One of the adolescents experiencing pregnancy was rated to be without problems. She and her 18-month old daughter lived with her parents. She was continuing her education at the college level, taking care of her child with the help of her parents, and apparently meeting the demands of life.

The second pregnant IRA was rated as having problems of a temporary nature. Her grades in school had improved since her pregnancy. She seemed determined to make things work.

We were not able to interview the third teen because she was unaware of her adoption. According to her parents, she was not doing well in school.

The male TRA living with his pregnant girl friend had little contact with his parents and had some problems with racial identity as well as with substance abuse. His parents reported that he was getting along well own his own.

Behavior difficulties. The adoptees were asked to complete a checklist of behavior difficulties, many of which adolescents experience to some degree. There were no differences between the number and type of problems checked by the TRAs and IRAs. Generally they indicated a problem occurred sometimes rather than often. The problems most frequently checked were moody, overly sensitive, aggressive, excessively competitive, worries too much, and unwise use of money. These would seem to be typical teenage difficulties with no particular implications for the future.

Problems and concerns. The majority of the adoptees said their lives were as good as, or better than, most of their peers. They attributed any problems to general life events such a school, family moving, getting the car, etc. Two of the adoptees expressed the desire to live in a more integrated neighborhoods. Another thought his neighborhood was boring.

Sixty percent of the teens wanted to change something about themselves. Personality or appearance were most frequently mentioned. Weight and temper were also on the "want to change list." Only 23% would change nothing.

The TRA parents were asked about their problems and concerns for the future. Concern about their TRA's future were never discussed. They reported only factors directly concerned with their own lives and future.

FAMILY RELATIONS

A. Parent-child Relationships

The majority of the adoptees reported getting along well with both their parents. Almost all in both groups reported they got along with at least one of their parents. Only a few IRAs reported not getting along so well with their fathers.

Approximately one-half of parents of both TRAs and IRAs said that their relationships with their study child was basically positive. The majority of the remaining parents said that the positive aspects of their relationships outweighed the negative. Only one or two parents in each group indicated that they had poor relationships with their child.

The adolescents' primary area of disagreement with their mothers was independence and freedom; with their fathers, it was personality differences.

The majority of both TRAs and IRAs thought their parent did not treat then differently than their siblings. Of the adoptees who thought they were treated differently, approximately equal numbers thought that the different treatment was alright, not alright because they felt favored, or not alright because they were treated too critically. Those saying the difference in treatment was alright believed it was due to sex and age differences.

The TRAs and IRAs rated their parents behavior toward them in terms of Acceptance, Rejection, Involvement and Individuation. There were no significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups.

Acknowledgment-rejection of differences. Approximately two-thirds of both the TRA mothers and fathers acknowledged the

differences of a biological and adoptive family as described by Kirk (1984). The parents answered, "yes," to such questions as: Do you have any special family ceremonies or days to celebrate the adoption? Are you keenly aware of the fact that you are an adoptive parent?

Only 40% of the IRA mothers and less than 25% of the IRA father acknowledged the differences. The mean Acknowledgment-of-Difference score of the TRA mothers was significantly higher than the mean score of IRA mothers with $t = 2.56$ (50), $p = .01$. We found the same direction of difference for the fathers with $t = 2.59$ (49), $p = .01$.

The Acknowledgment-of-Difference scores were independent of the adoptees' POSAC Adjustment and General Adjustment scores. Also among the divorced parents (N = 11), there was no evidence that they were more likely to reject differences of a biological and adoptive family.

With regard to the Same-Difference scores as described by Kirk (1984), both TRA and IRA mothers and fathers reported treating their children in every day situations the same as if they were biological children. They said no distinctions between biological and adoptive children were made when, for instance, the children were late in arriving home, they answered questions about where babies come from or the child was sick.

B. Sibling Relationships

The majority of the parents (>80%) reported their child got along well with his or her siblings. The adoptees themselves were not so positive in describing their relationships with their siblings. Only 60% of them said they got along well with all their siblings. The remaining reported that they got along well with some, not well with others. The primary reasons for not getting along involved age and sex differences, and personality conflicts. None of the TRAs mentioned race or adoption as a reason for not getting along with their siblings.

FRIENDSHIPS

As one becomes older, the opportunities to choose one's own friends becomes more possible. Parents choose friends for young children. The pool is often limited by who lives in the neighborhood. By early adolescence, and surely by late adolescence, friends are not limited to parent's choices, the neighborhood, or even the high school attended.

Friends are important for a child's healthy growth and development. They not only reflect one's identity but help to shape it. Friends help a child to learn skills for social

living and gradually to become more independent of his or her family.

A. Peer Friendships

All except four adolescents in Phase V listed by age and sex three or four friends. These same four were also children whose adjustment scores indicated problems. The existence of close friends or lack thereof was confirmed by report of their parents.

Half of the TRAs said their closest friends were predominately white; the other half indicated that some of their close friends were white, black, and/or Hispanic. The majority of the IRAs said their close friends were primarily black.

Table 6 summarizes the adoptees' friendships by sex and race. The majority of both the TRAs and the IRAs have white friends, both male and female. Three-fourths of the TRA females had black male and female friends while only about 60% of the TRA males had black male and female friends. At least 20% of the TRA males indicated that they had no opportunity for black friends. The TRA girls did not say that. Not unexpectedly all of the IRAs had black friends.

Table 6

TRA and IRA Friendships by Sex and Race

	Adoption Type			
	TRA		IRA	
Friendships	Male	Female	Male	Female
Black Male	61%	75%	100%	100%
Black Female	56%	75%	100%	100%
White Male	100%	80%	86%	91%
White Female	80%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7

TRA and IRA Dating by Sex and Race

	Adoption Type			
	TRA		IRA	
Dating	Male	Female	Male	Female
Black	39%	66%	100%	100%
White	78%	44%	43%	18%

B. Dating

One-third of all the adolescents said they only date in groups. Table 7 summarizes the dating patterns of the TRAs and IRAs.

Approximately two-thirds of the TRA females and 39% of the males have dated blacks. The dating of blacks was not found to be related to complexion, stated race, or primary race of high school. About 20% of the TRA males said they had no opportunities to date black females.

Both TRA males and females indicated they had the opportunity to date whites, but the males were more likely to do so. IRA females were least likely to date whites. The dating pattern, black males more likely than black females to date whites, was an interesting finding. In reviewing the race of the birth parents of the 35 TRAs, we learned that of 26 sets of birth parents who were classified as multiracial, 20 of the mothers were white and the fathers black.

When analyzing dating regardless of sex of TRA dater but according to type of school attended, we found that dating was not independent of primary race of school. ($X^2 = 6.54$, $p < .01$). When TRAs were in mixed race schools, they were likely not to date whites; in primarily white schools, they were likely to dates whites.

C. Older Friends

Approximately two-thirds of the TRAs were close to an adult other than their parents. Most frequently it was someone in their school or a friend of the family. The older friend was of the same race in only half of the cases.

Approximately three-fourths of the IRAs were close to an older adult. Most frequently is was a relative or a family friend of the same race.

ADOPTION

A. Knowledge of Adoption

Almost half of the TRAs said that as long as they could remember, they knew that they were adopted. Thirty percent said that they knew of their adoption before they were four years old. The IRAs, on the other hand, learned of their adoption at an older age. Almost 80% said that they were between 4 and 10 years of aged when they found out. Only 17% said they always knew.

The parents of one the IRAs would not permit their 17 year-old daughter to participate in the interview because she does not know about her adoption. We wonder if the attrition of IRAs from the project is due in part to some of the teens being unaware of their adoption. In a brief survey conducted with the dropouts prior to Phase V, we were not able to obtain any data useful for answering this question.

B. Knowledge of Birth Parents

One-third of the TRAs and 60% of the IRAs said they know nothing about their birth mothers. The majority of both groups said they know nothing about their birth fathers. Of those who know something about their birth parents, age and race are generally the characteristics known.

Some adoptees reported thinking about being placed (31%) and the characteristics of their birth parents (69%). Few thought about the possible existence of biological siblings.

The majority of the TRAs did not think about their birth parents at any certain time while half of the IRAs were likely to think about them at emotional times.

C. Talking about Adoption

The majority of both the TRAs and the IRAs rarely or never talk to their parents about adoption or characteristics of their birth parents. Of the 12% who more frequently talk to their parents about it, all were females. The 17% who would like to talk more with their parents about adoption were also primarily female.

The TRAs are more likely to initiate the conversation about adoption while the parents of the IRAs are more likely to initiate the discussion. The majority of the adoptees have no discomfort in talking with their parents about adoption and vice versa. The primary topic discussed with mothers is search and with fathers, birth parents. Twice as many girls are interested in talking about search. Gonyo and Watson (1987) found that more females actually search.

The majority of both groups do not talk very often about adoption with their siblings. The TRAs seem to joke about it rather than talk about it seriously. Most of the adoptees know others who are adopted but for the most part they do not talk with them about adoption.

D. Search

The phenomena of adoptees searching for biological parents has gained much attention in recent years. The publicity has brought into question the almost universal practice in the United States of

sealing adoption records (Chapman, Dorner, Silber, & Winterberg, 1986; Kraft, Palombo, Mitchell, Woods, Mitchell, Schmidt, & Tucker, 1985; Pannor & Baran, 1984). What should be done, if anything, for those interested in search who were adopted in the past and whose background is concealed from them as a result of laws and practices existing when they were adopted? To what degree should agencies be more open in the adoptions in which they are now involved? What is the significance of an adoptee's need to search?

Adoptees' interest in search. The majority of the adoptees in Phase V, those wanting and not wanting to meet their birth parents are plainly uncomfortable meeting them. The TRAs are particularly uncomfortable.

However, 38% of the TRAs and 53% of the IRAs not only want information about their birth parents but also are interested in meeting them. There are no sex differences.

Approximately one-third of the TRAs and one-fourth of the IRAs never or rarely wondered about their birth parents. About the same percentages of the two groups want information about their birth parents but have no interest in meeting them.

Of the remaining adoptees not wanting to meet, half of them gave as their reason lack of interest; the other half said they were content with their adoptive parents. Only one expressed anger toward the birth parents.

Almost three-fourths of the adoptive parents said they were comfortable with their child's meeting their birth parents and would even help find them. The adoptees have a different perception of this, however. Only 25% believe their parents would be comfortable with their meeting their birth parents.

Reasons for search. The most common reason stated for wanting to meet birth parents was to see how they look. Four said they want to know why they were put up for adoption. Only one adoptee, an IRA, wanted to establish regular contact.

We were not able to identity a "search profile." A number of variables were analyzed using the Chi-square statistic to determine if there are any significant differences between searchers and non-searchers. We analyzed the adoptees relationship with parents, whether the parents accepted or rejected the differences between having a biological and adopted child, the parent-child agreement about the child's race, number of children in the family and if the adoptees had other transracially adopted siblings. These variables were found for both the TRAs and IRAs to be independent of the desire to search.

We analyzed child characteristics of the searchers and non-searchers in the same way. For both TRAs and IRAs, biological

race, complexion, stated race, sex, age when first learned of adoption, and adjustment as determined by two measures were independent of the wish to search.

Research related to search issues. A 1985 newsletter of Truth Seekers in Adoption reported findings from the research of the Washington Adoptee Rights Movement (WARM). Of 948 cases who had completed their searches over a nine-year period, the average age was 31 years. The greatest number of searchers was between 27 and 28 years of age.

Campbell, Silverman, & Patti (1991) also reported that searchers in their study averaged 32.8 years of age, 10 years older than the non-searchers. If these figures are correct, we can anticipate that a greater percentage of the adoptees in this project will want to search for their birth parents when they are older. In Phase V, because the majority of the adoptees were not yet 18 years old, the age at which they are legally able to begin the search themselves, search was not really an option.

Our inability to identify a "search profile" is similar to the findings of other research. In our review of the literature about search (Aumend & Barrett, 1984; Campbell, Silverman, & Patti, 1991; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Kowal & Schilling, 1985; Lifton, 1979; Nickman, 1985; Sachdev, 1989; Sorosky, Baran, & Pannor, 1975; Triseliotis, 1973), no conclusive reasons for seeking one's birth parents were identified. Stein and Hoopes (1985) presented slight evidence that quality of family relationships may influence the desire to search and that the searching adoptees perceived themselves markedly different in physical appearance from their adoptive parents. However, these investigators pointed out that searching among 15-18 years old is not the general rule. The searchers in the studies reviewed represented a variety of psychological types and had a variety of reasons for searching.

E. Position on Transracial Adoption

Almost two-thirds of the TRAs and IRAs said that transracial adoption is a good idea without provision. Except for two adoptees, the remaining adoptees said transracial adoption is a good idea with a provision. The provision almost always involved parental sensitivity to the needs of the child. Race and color differences were not an issue.

Over 90% of the TRA parents but only 78% of the IRA parents thought transracial adoption was a good idea, with or without provision. The remaining parents thought it was a bad idea.

DROPOUTS

By telephone, we were able to contact 8 IRA families, one-third of those families no longer willing to participate in the Family Life Project. They agreed to answer a several questions over the phone.

We learned: that two of the families have experienced divorce, the adoptees' school grades were equally distributed between above average, average, and below average, and that disagreements about independence and restriction of freedom was a frequent problem. One family said their adoptee had self-esteem problems. Another family reported their adoptee had a bad temper and sibling problems. Based on limited information, we concluded that the families who dropped from the project are no different than the families who remained.

Garmezy (1974) noted in his original study that families who were under great stress and who had less competent children were more reluctant to be interviewed. We know of several families who fit that profile. We also know that several families rejoined the project after skipping one or more previous phases due to problem situations in the family. However, we would want to have more information before drawing a conclusion similar to Garmezy's.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Our primary purpose in Phase V of the Family Life Project was to answer questions about the growth and development of a sample of black adolescents who were placed in adoption as infants, some across racial lines (TRAs) and some with black families (IRAs). In spite of initial differences between the TRAs and IRAs over which we had no control and which reasonably could have affected our findings about their development at adolescences, we believe that these differences do not compromise our conclusions.

We found the majority of the adolescents whether TRA or IRA to be well-adjusted. Any identified problems were, for the most part, the same types of problems experienced by adolescents in the general population. The adoptees with problems in this phase were not the same ones with problems in earlier phases of our roject.

The TRAs appeared to feel comfortable with their stated race. The race they identified with was a function of biological heritage and complexion, not what their parents said, where they lived, or the racial composition of the school they attended. Their stated race was not related to two measures of adjustment.

Except for four, all the adolescents had a number of friends. Most of them had some black friends and some white friends, although the friends of the TRAs were primarily white. In dating the TRA males where more likely to date whites, the females, blacks.

We did not find support for the hypothesis of Kirk (1984) that rejection-of-the-differences of between adoptive and biological families is associated with family problems and developmental difficulties in adopted children. The IRA parents were more likely than the TRA parents to reject differences, but their children did not have greater rates of problems than TRAs and no more family problems were noted.

Search for birth parents was not a big issue as yet for these adolescents. Thirty-eight percent of the TRAs and 53% of the IRAs were interestedin searching. However, we did not identified a "search profile." Our estimates of adjustment were not related to the wish to search. When these adolescents become of age to search, we will want to investigate more extensively the desire and variables hypothesized to be related.

Shireman (1988) summarized her findings of Phase IV of the Family Life Project by saying that adoption was a good plan for this cohort of children. Their development at that time was very similar to that of children growing up in birth families. Our findings can be summarized similarly.

Although the practice of transracial adoption continues to evoke controversy, we found no indication that the TRAs were faring less well then the children placed in black families.

Plans are now being made to interview these adoptees as young adults, 21 years of age and older. We expect that they and their families will be facing different issues than they have heretofore. Based on past research, ours and others, we are not hypothesizing that different conclusions will be reach. However, only research will tell.

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